2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

Inside Vasilika's Homes

Let us first consider the house. A new two-story house has the greatest prestige, but any family that builds a new house, even if it is only the small one-room brick house, gains some standing in the eyes of the villagers, although mild ridicule of the insignificant efforts of people of low prestige is not unknown in the village.

In the two-story houses, old or new, the ground floor typically consists of two rooms, one of which has cement flooring, with stuccoed walls and a fireplace. Many families use this room for all purposes: as kitchen, living room, and as the bedroom for all the members of the family. The women cook in the small fireplace, always conserving precious wood, the annual supply of which is usually purchased in October. They place two thin logs in the form of a V so that only the point at which the logs meet actually burns.

The only characteristic of the room which qualifies it as a kitchen is a wide window ledge, hollowed out to the depth of two inches, and lined with cement. The shallow basin slopes toward the window with a short length of metal tubing pushed through the outer wall of the house. A small water container with a spigot at the bottom is hung on a side wall above the shallow cement-lined basin, and the kitchen appointments are complete. Waste water drains through the tubing out into the yard of the house. The villagers often hang some towels near the basin and wash their hands and faces there each morning. The women of Vasilika used to agitate for the construction of a sink, both because it was a sign of progress and because it would ease some of their work. In 1961 they were eagerly awaiting the piping of water into the houses.

The lower floor all-purpose room is furnished with a few straight wooden chairs with cane seats, and may also have a table and a bed. Proper beds are not essential, however, because thin pallets can be brought out at night and placed on boards resting on wooden saw horses to create a bed, or may be merely laid out on the floor. The women pile the bedding, including folded pallets, sheets, and blankets, neatly in one corner of the room and cover the pile with a white rectangular cloth bedding-cover especially designed for the purpose.

The second lower room has an earthen floor and may be used for storing household supplies, wine-barrels, and agricultural produce. Among the less prosperous families, the lower floor may consist of only one earthen-floored room in which a curtain hanging near one end separates the living section from the storage area.

The upper story, apart from the terrace, may have several rooms with wooden plank floors and stucco walls. A second fireplace, sharing a flue with the lower one, may become the focus of what the villagers call the winter room. It is a smaller version of the all-purpose room below.

The remaining second-floor room is called the *saloni*, and is best designated in English as "the front parlor." It is the ceremonial room of the house, the part in which the family represents itself to the outside world. Visitors are